1. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting an electronic online auction between a plurality of potential bidders, the plurality of potential bidders competing for a lot having at least one product, comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving first bid information for a lot from a first bidder, said received first bid information representing a first bid that is originally defined in a context of said first bidder;

(b) storing information reflective of said submitted first bid, said stored information enabling a relative comparison of submitted bids, including said first bid, on a common competitive basis; and

(c) transmitting second bid information defined in a context of a second bidder that is different than said context of said first bidder to said second bidder, said transmitted second bid information enabling said second bidder to view said first bid originally defined in said context of said first bidder in said context of said second bidder.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of (d) generating a transformed bid using said received first bid information, and wherein step (a) comprises the step of receiving untransformed bid information.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a linear transformation having at least one of a multiplicative adjustment and an additive adjustment.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein step (d) comprises the step of multiplying a received bid price, specified in a local currency of said first bidder, with a pre-defined exchange rate to yield a base currency bid price.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein step (d) comprises the step of transforming a received price per physical measure of weight or volume of coal into a standardized unit of value to the buyer of coal using multiplicative adjustments and additive adjustments based upon

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one or more of the thermal content, percentage sulfur, percentage ash, percentage water, and hardness of coal of said first bidder.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a non-linear transformation.

7. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein step (d) comprises the step of transforming received bid information using a lookup table.

8. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a combination of linear, non-linear, and lookup table transformations simultaneously.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (a) comprises the step of receiving transformed bid information.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein step (a) comprises the step of receiving a bid price in a base currency, wherein said bid price is originally defined in a local currency of said first bidder.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [1,] **9, wherein step (b)** further [comprising the step of (d)] **comprises** generating detransformed bid information, and wherein step (c) **further** comprises the step of transmitting said detransformed bid information to said second bidder.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a linear transformation having at least one of a multiplicative adjustment and an additive adjustment.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein step (d) comprises the step of converting a base currency price into a bid price in a local currency of said second bidder using a pre-defined exchange rate.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein step (d) comprises the step of converting a received bid price specified in a local currency of said first bidder into a local currency of said second bidder using a pre-defined exchange rate.

15. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein step (d) comprises the step of transforming a received price per physical measure of weight or volume of coal into a standardized unit of value to the buyer of coal using multiplicative adjustments and additive adjustments based upon one or more of the thermal content, percentage sulfur, percentage ash, percentage water, and hardness of coal of said first bidder.

16. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a non-linear transformation.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a transformation using a lookup table.

18. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a combination of linear, non-linear, and lookup table transformations simultaneously.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises the step of transmitting second bid information to be transformed by said second bidder.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein step (c) comprises the step of transmitting a base currency price to be transformed by said second bidder into a local currency of said second bidder.

21. (Previously Presented) A system for conducting an electronic online auction between a plurality of potential bidders, the plurality of potential bidders competing for a lot having at least one product, comprising:

means for receiving first bid information for a lot from a first bidder, said received first bid information representing a first bid that is originally defined in a context of said first bidder;

means for storing information reflective of said submitted first bid, said stored information enabling a relative comparison of submitted bids including said first bid on a common competitive basis; and

means for transmitting second bid information defined in a context of a second bidder that is different than said context of said first bidder to said second bidder, said transmitted second bid information enabling said second bidder to view said first bid originally defined in said context of said first bidder in said context of said second bidder.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, further comprising means for generating a transformed bid using said received first bid information, and wherein said received first bid information is untransformed bid information.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein said means for generating performs a linear transformation using at least one of a multiplicative adjustment and an additive adjustment.

24. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein said means for generating multiplies a received bid price, specified in a local currency of said first bidder, with a pre-defined exchange rate to yield a base currency bid price.

25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein said means for generating transforms a received price per physical measure of weight or volume of coal into a standardized unit of value to the buyer of coal using multiplicative adjustments and additive adjustments based upon one or more of the thermal content, percentage sulfur, percentage ash, percentage water, and hardness of coal of said first bidder.

26. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein said means for generating performs a non-linear transformation.

27. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein said means for generating transforms received bid information using a lookup table.

28. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein said means for generating performs a combination of linear, non-linear, and lookup table transformations simultaneously.

29. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein said received first bid information is transformed bid information.

30. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein said received first bid information is a bid price in a base currency, wherein said bid price is originally defined in a local currency of said first bidder.

31. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [21,] 29, further comprising means for generating detransformed bid information, [and]wherein said transmitted second bid information [is] comprises detransformed bid information.

32. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said means for generating performs a linear transformation using at least one of a multiplicative adjustment and an additive adjustment.

33. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said means for generating converts a base currency price into a bid price in a local currency of said second bidder using a pre-defined exchange rate.

34. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said means for generating converts a received bid price specified in a local currency of said first bidder into a local currency of said second bidder using a pre-defined exchange rate.

35. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said means for generating transforms a received price per physical measure of weight or volume of coal into a standardized unit of value to the buyer of coal using multiplicative adjustments and additive adjustments based upon one or more of the thermal content, percentage sulfur, percentage ash, percentage water, and hardness of coal of said first bidder.

36. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said means for generating performs a non-linear transformation.

37. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said means for generating performs a transformation using a lookup table.

38. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said means for generating performs a combination of linear, non-linear, and lookup table transformations simultaneously.

39. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein said transmitted second bid information is to be transformed by said second bidder.

40. (Original) The system of claim 39, wherein said transmitted second bid information is a base currency price to be transformed by said second bidder into a local currency of said second bidder.

41. (Previously Presented) A method of participating in an electronic online auction between a plurality of potential bidders, the plurality of potential bidders competing for a lot having at least one product, comprising the steps of:

(a) transmitting first bid information for a lot to an auction server, said transmitted first bid information representing a first bid that is originally defined in a context of a first bidder, said transmitted first bid information being used by the auction server in a comparison of said first bid with other submitted bids, said other submitted bids originally defined in contexts different from said context of said first bidder;

(b) receiving second bid information from said auction server, said received second bid information representing a second bid that was submitted by a second bidder, said second bid being originally defined in a context different from said context of said first bidder; and

(c) using said received second bid information to display a relative comparison of said first bid and said second bid, said relative comparison shown in said context of said first bidder.

42. (Original) The method of claim 41, further comprising the step of (d) generating a transformed bid, and wherein step (a) comprises the step of transmitting transformed bid information.

43. (Original) The method of claim 42, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a linear transformation using at least one of a multiplicative adjustment and an additive adjustment.

44. (Original) The method of claim 43, wherein step (d) comprises the step of multiplying a bid price, specified in a local currency of said first bidder, with a pre-defined exchange rate to yield a base currency bid price.

45. (Original) The method of claim 42, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a non-linear transformation.

46. (Original) The method of claim 42, wherein step (d) comprises the step of transforming received bid information using a lookup table.

47. (Original) The method of claim 42, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a combination of linear, non-linear, and lookup table transformations simultaneously.

48. (Original) The method of claim 41, wherein step (a) comprises the step of transmitting untransformed bid information.

49. (Original) The method of claim 48, wherein step (a) comprises the step of transmitting a bid price in a local currency of said first bidder.

50. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, wherein step (a) comprises the step of transmitting a price per physical measure of weight or volume for a lot of coal [unique to] **defined by** said first bidder.

Claims 51 and 52 (Canceled).

53. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein step (d) comprises the step of multiplying a received bid price, specified in a local currency of said second bidder, with a pre-defined exchange rate to yield a bid price in a local currency of said first bidder.

54. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein step (d) comprises the step of multiplying a received bid price, specified in a base currency, with a pre-defined exchange rate to yield a bid price in a local currency of said first bidder.

55. (Original) The method of claim 41, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a non-linear transformation.

56. (Original) The method of claim 41, wherein step (d) comprises the step of detransforming said received second bid information using a lookup table.

57. (Original) The method of claim 41, wherein step (d) comprises the step of performing a combination of linear, non-linear, and lookup table transformations simultaneously.

58. (Canceled)

59. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [58,]**41,** wherein step (b) comprises the step of receiving a bid price in a local currency of said first bidder.

60. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [58,] 50, wherein step (b) comprises the step of receiving a price per physical measure of weight or volume [, wherein a lot of coal uniquely defined by said first bidder].

Claims 61 – 68 (Canceled).

69. (Previously Presented) A method of participating in an electronic online auction including a plurality of participants, wherein the participants include a sponsor and at least two potential bidders, the potential bidders competing for award of a lot, comprising:

(a) receiving bid information including a bid from a first bidder, said bid information including said bid defined in a first context; and

(b) redefining said bid information including said bid to a second context that differs from said first context; and

(c) comparing said redefined bid information to other bid information on a common competitive basis.

70. (Canceled).

71. (Original) The method of claim 69, wherein step (b) comprises the step of generating a base currency bid price using a predefined exchange rate and a received local currency bid price.

72. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for [enabling] use by a processor in a computer system to process bidding information in an auction between a plurality of bidders, said computer program product comprising:

a computer [usable] readable medium having a computer readable program code embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on the computer system, said computer readable program code comprising

a first computer readable program code [enabling the computer system] to transmit first bid information for a lot having at least one product to an auction

server, said transmitted first bid information representing a first bid that is originally defined in a context of a first bidder, said transmitted first bid information being used by the auction server in a comparison of said first bid with other submitted bids, said other submitted bids originally defined in contexts different from said context of said first bidder;

a second computer readable program code [enabling the computer system] to receive second bid information from said auction server, said received second bid information representing a second bid that was submitted by a second bidder, said second bid being originally defined in a context of said second bidder that is different from said context of said first bidder; and

a third computer readable program code [enabling the computer system] to display a relative comparison of said first bid and said second bid in a context of said first bidder.

73. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for enabling a processor in a computer system to process bidding information in an auction between a plurality of bidders, said computer program product comprising:

a computer [usable] **readable** medium having a computer readable program code embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on the computer system, said computer readable program code comprising

a first computer readable program code [enabling the computer system] to receive bid information including a bid from a bidder for a lot;

a second computer readable program code [enabling the computer system] to generate a transformed bid using said bid information including said bid; and

a third computer readable program code [enabling the computer system] to[said] transmit **said** transformed bid to an auction server, said transformed bid being used by said auction server to generate a relative comparison of bids on a common competitive basis, said bids originally defined in at least two different bidder-specific contexts.

74. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for enabling a processor in a computer system to process bidding information in an auction between a plurality of bidders, said computer program product comprising:

a computer [usable] **readable** medium having a computer readable program code embodied in said medium for causing an application program to execute on the computer system, said computer readable program code comprising

a first computer readable program code [enabling the computer system] to receive first bid information for a lot having at least one product from a first bidder, said received first bid information representing a first bid that is originally defined in a context of said first bidder;

a second computer readable program code [enabling the computer system] to store information reflective of said submitted first bid, said stored information enabling a relative comparison of submitted bids including said first bid on a common competitive basis; and

a third computer readable program code for [enabling the computer system] to transmit second bid information defined in a context of a second bidder that is different than said context of said first bidder to said second bidder, said transmitted second bid information enabling said second bidder to view said first bid originally defined in said context of said first bidder in said context of said second bidder.

Claim 75 (Canceled).